Ute Indians Hold Elaborate Sun Dance

Strange Regalia Brought To Salt Lake

In the Ute Indian sun-dance ceremonies an important part of the regalia is a white eagle's wing, waved back and forth over the body. Ceremonial tomahawks, made of reindeer hide and gay tufts of feathers also are carried by each brave. Miss Emily Warburton of the University of Utah summer school is displaying the trophies brought back by Prof. A. A. Kerr for the school archaeological museum.

Prof. A. A. Kerr Brings Many Trinkets From Uintah Reservation

Solemn ceremonies of the Ute Indian sun dance took place last week at the Uintah reservation. These rites are engaged in annually, when the Indians pray to the spirits for the health of the community. The sun dance is the great religious event of the Indian calendar—a high light in the spiritual life of the community.

Prof. Andrew A. Kerr, anthropology instructor at Harvard, and field worker for the University of Utah archaeology department, attended the ceremonies. "I have never heard a more impressive prayer than that of the old Indian 'medicine man,'" said Mr. Kerr.

The dance began Monday night and continued until Thursday noon. Forty men danced all this time, swaying with a wrapped, ecstatic look on their faces, without food or water. Not one dropped out of line. The rite was held in a circular corral about 40 feet in diameter. At the center is a forked pole, painted in bright colors, about 20 feet in height, adorned with a buffalo's skull.

The dancers are themselves painted in varicolored hues. Soft tufts of feathers are fastened on their little fingers and in their hair. White eagles' wings are carried in their hands as part of the ceremonial costume.

The women of the tribe do not dance, but sing in time to the swaying rhythm. Drums keep time also. Prizes are given to the most skillful dancer. This year a man 80 years of age was the winner.

As a part of the ceremony the ill members of the tribe receive the prayers and invocations of the medicine man. He rubs an eagle's wing in the dirt, which is believed to be a cleansing agent, then rubs it over the body of the afflicted. Then he scatters earth with it, signifying the taking of pain from the body and flinging it away. The reverent attitude of the Indians is a revelation, according to Professor Kerr.